

JOHN WARREN WHITE AND FAMILY

The Presidential Paper of
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Read at the Annual Meeting of the Royal Historical Society
 of Queensland, 25th September 1975.

John Warren White of Caherblonick, County Clare, Ireland, was born in 1828: he was the eldest son of a barrister, Thomas Warren White (known as the "Father of the Irish Bar") and Elizabeth White, who, before her marriage, was Elizabeth Persse of Roxburgh, County Galway, Ireland.

Choosing an army career, he was an officer of the Rifle Brigade, with which he had served in Canada, but resigned his commission and departed for Australia in the sailing ship "Lightning", arriving in the fast developing Colony of Victoria in 1850.

Six feet three in height, strikingly handsome, with high principles and a courtly manner, being also a good horseman and a first-class whip, he soon found his place in the country life of the colony.

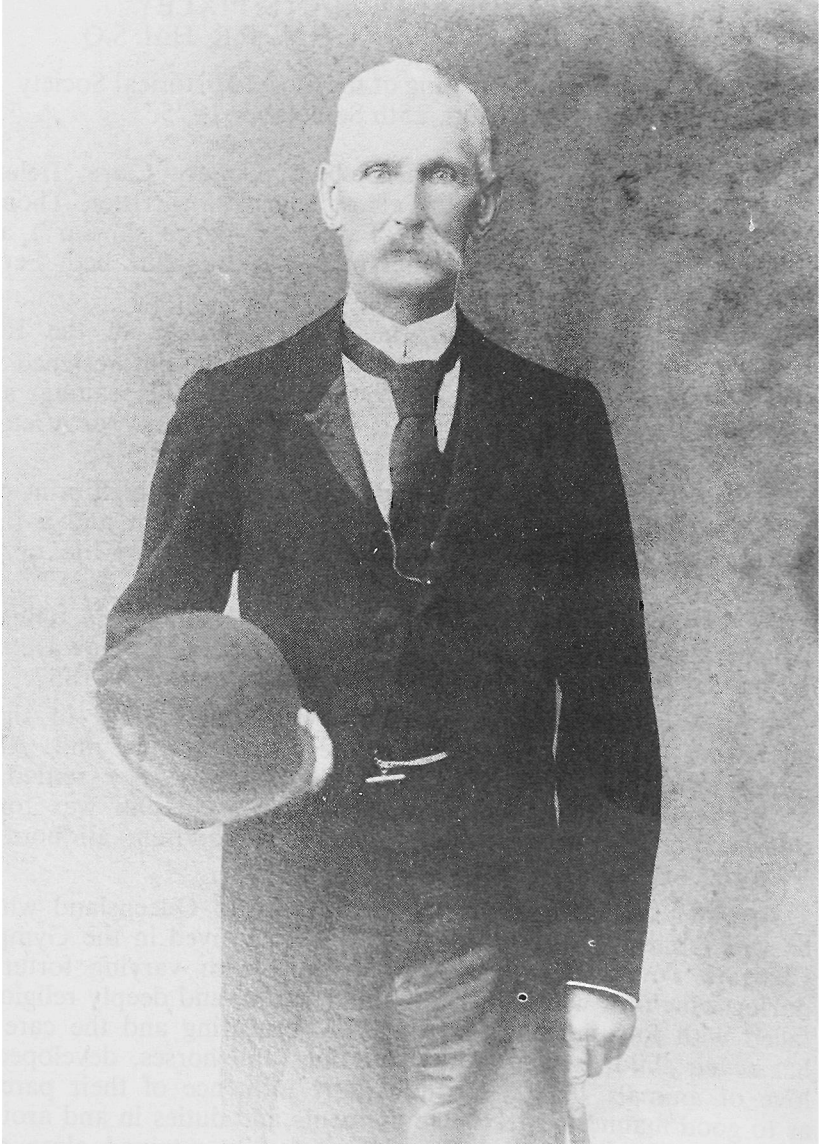
There in due course he met and married Maria Gibton, daughter of Robert Nassau Gibton of "Tallaght", County Dublin, Ireland, who had come to Melbourne in the "Afric" in 1857.

John White became occupied in buying and selling of sheep and other properties: at one time he owned a flour mill. After living with his wife in various country towns they settled in St. Arnaud, seventy miles from Ballarat, and John was for a time mayor of the town. They had eight children, all born in Victoria, one of whom died in infancy.

In 1881 John White brought his family to Queensland where he was interested in pastoral property. They lived in the Gympie, Charters Towers and Gladstone districts with varying fortunes, during which his wife, gentle, of small stature and deeply religious, faced with fortitude the hardships of pioneering and the care of her seven children who, with their dogs and horses, developed a love of animals. The wise and kindly influence of their parents as to good manners, speech, amusements and duties in and around the home was a lasting one and the family retained close and affectionate links with each other through the succeeding years.

Leaving the country, they came, with a small capital remaining, to Brisbane to live at Franz Road, Clayfield, in a house called "The Bungalow".

When the Stock Exchange was inaugurated in Brisbane, John Warren White became its first president in 1885.



John Warren White

He and his wife each lived to the age of ninety years: John died in January 1918 and his wife in December 1925. A saga of service to their country runs through the story of the family.

THE FAMILY

The names of the children were: Maud Letitia, John Warren, Dudley Persse, Katherine Gertrude, Mabel Elizabeth, Cyril Brudenell Bingham, and Eustace Nassau.

Maude Letitia (1861-1953), the eldest, married in 1884 Boyd Echlin, an Irishman who came to Australia and took up land in Queensland. He served as a captain in the 3rd Queensland Mounted Infantry, with the Boer War Contingent, and during World War I was commandant of the prisoner of war internment camp in Brisbane.

Their son, Richard Fleming Warren ("Warrie"), was in the Queensland National Bank at Yangan for a time, then went to live in Nigeria, until the outbreak of World War I when he left for England, joined the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards, and served throughout the war, rising to the rank of major.

(Rumour hath it that, during one weekend leave in France, Warrie and some fellow officers journeyed to Paris with H.R.H. Edward, Prince of Wales, in the Royal car, with Warrie sitting on the Prince's knee!).

During the war he married Isobel Buckland Taylor, returning after the close of hostilities to Africa, but later he went back to England. In World War II he served in the Brigade of Guards home guard with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

Gladys Ivy ("Dai") Echlin, Maude Letitia's elder daughter, took up a nursing career and in November 1914 left Brisbane in the hospital ship "Kyarra" for the Middle East, where she served in No. 1 Australian General Hospital in Egypt nursing the many wounded who came from Gallipoli in 1915. After returning to Australia in a hospital ship in 1916 "Dai" went to England, and after a period in Harefield Hospital, served in field hospitals in France which at times were subjected to heavy fire. She was awarded the associate Royal Red Cross which was presented to her at Buckingham Palace by King George V.

"Dai" Echlin returned to Brisbane after the war and joined the public service as a nursing sister.

Nancy Lynette ("Nan") Echlin, the younger daughter, was a journalist attached to the Brisbane "Courier" until her marriage to Lieutenant-Commander Eric Feldt (formerly of the R.A.N.), at that time a patrol officer in New Guinea. At the outbreak of World War II he joined the Navy and formed the Coast Watchers, that small and devoted band which rendered invaluable

service under his control and supervision with the rank of commander. He was awarded the O.B.E. for outstanding service in the South Pacific and later wrote a book, "The Coast Watchers". When her husband was stationed in Townsville, Nan made camouflage nets, and helped in service canteens and with the Red Cross. The Feldts had no children.

Maude Letitia Echlin died on 2nd August 1953 aged 92.

"WHITE BY NAME AND NATURE"

John Warren ("Jack") (1863-1947), the eldest son, joined the Queensland Police Force as a cadet in 1882 soon after arriving with the family and was sent to North Queensland, where he served in a number of districts and was in charge of units of the native police.

Ten years later he married Elizabeth Rose Georgina ("Ruby") Barker, daughter of William Barker of "Nunnington", Kangaroo Point, and "Tamrookum", Logan River district. Eventually Jack and Ruby bought a home in Oaklands Parade, East Brisbane, opposite where the Church of England Grammar School now stands.

Jack White was a splendid horseman, and when he was appointed Inspector in charge of the Brisbane district in 1898, this included responsibility for the Mounted Police, which he led on ceremonial occasions. During his term he conducted investigations into the notorious Gatton murders. Due to ill health he retired in 1911 and was awarded the Imperial Service Medal.

He then served as stipendiary steward of the Queensland Turf Club for some years, finally leaving to live at Tamborine Mountain until his death in June 1947 aged 84 years. Referred to by many who knew him as "White by name and white by nature", residents from the Mountain hired a bus to travel to Brisbane to pay their last respects at his funeral.

The "Jack" Whites had three sons. Godfrey William Warren, born in 1849, joined the 9th Light Horse Regiment in South Australia soon after the outbreak of World War I in August 1914, serving in Egypt, Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia, where he was A.D.C. to General Sir Harry Chauvel, and was mentioned in despatches. Godfrey then transferred to the Indian Army with the 5th Cavalry, Bengal Lancers in which by the end of 1918 he was adjutant and held the rank of captain.

Retiring to Australia in 1922, he lived at Tamborine Mountain until his death in 1930 as the result of an illness contracted during the war.

The second son, John Galliard Warren ("Jock"), born in 1897, served with 1st Corps Cyclists Battalion in World War I in France, and was given a commission in the Second World War as transport officer ship's staff with the rank of captain. While assisting the 8th Division A.I.F., he was taken prisoner of war by the Japanese and spent three and a half years in Changi Gaol, Singapore. After the cessation of hostilities he returned in ill health to Brisbane in 1945.

Thomas Warren, the third son, born in 1902 and entered Duntroon Military College in 1920. After graduating four years later he was sent to India, being attached to a Cavalry regiment (the Scots Greys) for approximately two years. Appointed to Camberley Staff College in 1938, Tom White, after completing the staff course in 1939, went to France on the outbreak of World War II and served in nearly every theatre of the war, being twice mentioned in despatches.

He was on the staff of General Douglas Macarthur (Supreme Commander of the allied forces in the South-West Pacific) from whom he received a citation and the Legion of Merit (officer). After the end of hostilities he spent two years in Berlin as head of the military mission. As state marshal for the Queensland tour in 1954 of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, he was invested on its conclusion with the M.V.O. by the Queen. In 1957 he retired from the Army with the rank of Brigadier. (Tom White's only son Donald served with the R.A.A.F. in Korea and Vietnam, winning the D.F.C. He later rescued a man off the N.S.W. coast with a hazardous helicopter manoeuvre, for which he received the Queen's Commendation).

ANOTHER WARRIOR SON

Dudley Persse (1867-1947) joined the permanent military forces in Queensland as a young man, serving also in other parts of Australia. He suffered serious injuries from a riding accident on the Darling Downs which left him partially paralyzed in one leg. Nevertheless he remained in the Army and continued riding. As a Lieutenant-Colonel in World War I he commanded the 13th Australian Light Horse in France and was mentioned in despatches by Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig. The citation was signed by Sir Winston Churchill who was then Secretary of State for war. (This, together with the French Croix de Guerre which he was awarded, and his medals, are held by the Royal Historical Society of Queensland).



Dudley Persse White

In 1908 Dudley married Carlie Yaldwyn of Toowoomba, daughter of William Yaldwyn, Police Magistrate of Brisbane. She went to England during the war to be near him, living in a caravan in Sussex. On their return to Australia in 1919, Dudley was promoted to colonel and appointed commandant of Tasmania,

holding this position until his retirement in 1922. The following year they left to live in England.

Katherine Gertrude (1869-1959) was unmarried and lived with her parents and her younger sister Mabel (Mrs. Hutchison) in Brisbane. Proficient in all the accepted accomplishments of the day, she was a fine musician and singer and skilled in needlework, embroidery and woodcarving. Katherine knitted garments unremittingly for the Armed Services during World War I.

Mabel Elizabeth (1871-1941) as a young woman was once the "belle of the ball" at Government House, Brisbane, where she danced the "gallop" with Lord Lamington, the then Governor. In August 1899 she married Lieutenant-Colonel Kenneth Hutchison a son of Peter Hutchison of Glenronald, Victoria. As a young man Kenneth Hutchison was part-owner of "Canning Downs" in Queensland, but later joined the permanent Military Forces.

Before his marriage he had been on exchange duty in England and India. For many years president of the Queensland Rifle Association, a keen horseman and a crack shot, he won many trophies. Only five months after his marriage he sailed in the "Maori King" in January 1900 bound for the Boer War in command of the 2nd Queensland Mounted Infantry. Their horses were in the ship's hold. After serving in several engagements, he returned in December that year to Brisbane. He and his wife were close friends of the Governor of Queensland, Sir Herbert Cherm-side, and Lady Cherm-side.

Their marriage ended tragically in May 1902 when Kenneth Hutchison was killed in a train accident at Brisbane, three months before the birth of his daughter and only child. He was given a military funeral at which Sir Herbert Cherm-side was a pall bearer. Kenneth Hutchison's horse "Lancer", with his master's riding boots reversed in the stirrups, was led behind the gun carriage. ("Lancer's" horseshoes were later given to the 2/14 Queensland Mounted Infantry together with the sword).

In August that year their daughter was born and christened Kenneth after her father, but thereafter was always called "Neth".

The young widow later bought a home in Vulture Street, South Brisbane where her mother, father and sister Katherine came to live with her. The home "Kyeewa" (which remains in the possession of Neth Hutchison to this day) became a focal point for all members of the White family to foregather. Thus, as their story unfolded over the years, Neth, with keen interest and a retentive memory, became the family historian.

Neth, after a private school education majoring in music (A.T.C.L. and L.T.C.L.), became State secretary of the Queensland Girl Guides' Association from 1926 until 1942. In 1927 at a Government House ball she was one of the dancing partners of the Duke of York and, in England ten years later, was presented at Court to him as King George VI.

Early in World War II she formed and was commandant of the Girl Guides' Voluntary Aid Detachment (Q 168) and was also a lecturer in air raid precautions. Joining the Australian Women's Army Service in 1943 and serving in New South Wales, Neth lived in Sydney after demobilisation until 1950 when she returned to Brisbane to become secretary of the Victoria League, and whilst visiting England in 1953 was bidden to attend the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in Westminster Abbey.

Resigning from the Victoria League after nine years service, owing to ill-health, she was made an honorary life member. With a life-long interest in the Royal Queensland Society for Prevention of Cruelty, Neth still remains a member of the State Council.

SIR BRUDENELL WHITE

Cyril Brudenell Bingham (1877-1940), the third son, was five years old when the family moved to Queensland, first to the country and by the time he was of school age, to Clayfield, a suburb of Brisbane. He first went to the local State school, then to the Normal School at corner of Edward and Adelaide Streets in Brisbane. Since childhood Brudenell's keen intelligence had been noted and when he was fourteen his eldest brother Jack, with great self-sacrifice, enabled him to attend for a year Eton School at Nundah, conducted by an old Eton master, Major A. J. Boyd. (It is hardly necessary to say that Eton jackets were worn!).

Leaving the school at fifteen with a prize for shorthand (which he found most useful throughout his life), he entered the Australian Joint Stock Bank in Brisbane as a clerk, riding in and out of town each day. Transferred by the bank first to Gympie then to Charters Towers, Brudenell sent part of his pay to his mother and gave a weekly sum to a local schoolmaster to coach him after banking hours so that he might continue his education. He greatly disliked his work in the bank and at first intended to become a barrister, but at Gympie he became a close friend of T. W. Glasgow of the Queensland National Bank, who had joined the Queensland Mounted Infantry, and his interest was also stirred by a mining surveyor, Captain C. B. Steele who commanded the Wide Bay Infantry Regiment. In 1897 Brudenell was commissioned as a subaltern in this volunteer regiment, and in that year an examination was held for the appointment of officers to the

Queensland Permanent Artillery. With only a short time to complete his studies, Brudenell passed top of the list, thus beginning a career in which he was to become one of Australia's most brilliant and distinguished soldiers.



Sir Brudenell White

In 1902 he left for the South African War as a subaltern of the Commonwealth Horse and served in the mobile columns under Major-General Sir Ian Hamilton, but the greatest test of his quality came on the voyage home in the "Drayton Grange". The

ship, insufficiently prepared, was overcrowded with more than a thousand troops who were approaching a state of mutiny and, as ship's adjutant, Brudenell was called upon to go down to the troop decks to face them. Each time he did so and spoke to them they threatened to toss him in a blanket; and each time he returned untossed, until the tension was finally eased.

In 1905 he married Ethel Davidson, daughter of Walter Henry Davidson, a grazier of "Coliban Park" near Elphinstone, Victoria. Then followed in 1906-1907 two strenuous years at the Staff College, Camberley, England: During this time their first child Margaret was born.

His confidential report from the Staff College on completion of the course is interesting and reads as follows:—

"Lieut. C. B. B. White Age 31/32
Royal Australian Artillery November 12, 1907.

This officer started the course here with a lack of soldering experience as compared with his companions. He is modest and unassuming, but possesses considerable ability and powers of application. The results have been eminently satisfactory and he promises to be a valuable staff officer. His work now reaches a uniformly high standard. He can express himself well and clearly on paper. His opinion carries weight with the other students and he deserves credit for passing out so high. Popular and a good horseman, he will do well either in the field or in an office and I recommend him for an appointment which will lead to employment on the General Staff.

Sgd. H. Wilson
Staff College".

In 1911 Brudenell assisted General Bridges in establishing the Royal Australian Military College at Duntroon, then again was sent to England. On the outbreak of war in 1914, as a colonel, Brudenell was appointed Chief of Staff to General Bridges and produced from his desk the plan for the mobilisation of the 1st A.I.F. He sailed for Egypt with the First Contingent in November 1914: He landed at Gallipoli on 25th April 1915, re-organising the units during the confusion of the landing, for which he was awarded the D.S.O.

He was with General Bridges and other members of his staff when Bridges was mortally wounded. Before he died he said to Brudenell: "Well White, at least I have commanded an Australian division for six months".

ACTION AT GALLIPOLI

When General Birdwood came from England to replace General Bridges, Brudenell continued as Chief of Staff. As realisation came that Gallipoli would have to be evacuated, there was much consultation among the generals and it was estimated that there would probably be 10,000 casualties while this was taking place, but in the weeks to follow, Brudenell drew up plans from which as he said later, "we schooled the Turks to silence" — firing fewer shots until only one man was left walking up and down a trench firing a shot here, throwing a hand grenade there, to give the impression that the trenches were still fully manned. In the meantime the troops, with their feet muffled by strips of blanket or other material, had been progressively moving down to the beach and embarking in ships during the hours of darkness.

The evacuation, which had originally been thought likely to cost one-third of the force, was completed at Anzac with only two casualties and without the knowledge of the Turks. As the Australian Official History records, Brudenell "had exercised almost single-handed control over the movement at Anzac . . . it was White whose vision — combined with an unfailing sense of proportion and power of vivid explanation and courteous insistence in conference — influenced more than any other human agency the tactics by which the evacuation, not only at Anzac and Suvla but also at Cape Helles, was carried out".

When Birdwood sailed the following year with the headquarters of his 1 Anzac Corps from Egypt for France, Brudenell, promoted to Brigadier-General, went with him as Chief of Staff. His promotion to Major-General came on New Year's Day 1917, and when Birdwood assumed command of the 5th Army, he continued as his Chief of Staff. (Birdwood later urged his appointment as Haig's Chief of Staff).

In 1919 Brudenell (who had just been knighted, K.C.M.G.), returned home in the battle cruiser H.M.A.S. "Australia" as the guest of Commodore Dumaesq, and became Chief of the General Staff a year later at the age of 43, retiring in 1923 to become chairman of a Commission to re-organise the Federal Public Service. In 1920 he had organised the visit of the Prince of Wales to Australia and, in 1927, that of the Duke of York (later King George VI) who came with the Duchess for the opening of the first Parliament held in Canberra. After the latter visit Lord Cavan, who had accompanied the Duke and Duchess, wrote to Brudenell: "I think you are the world's champion organiser. Their Royal Highnesses are simply delighted with everything".

Always fond of the land, Brudenell bought a property in 1925 called "Woodnaggerak" (Longarm) on the Western Highway some

120 miles from Melbourne. Here he settled his wife and family and came each weekend to work on the property. They had four children: Margaret Clemina (Mrs. T. G. Beggs), James Edward Brudenell, Patrick Fitzmaurice Brudenell (Brigade Major 8th Brigade, 2nd A.I.F.), Rosemary Brudenell (Mrs. David Derham).

Three years later he was offered by the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency and accepted the positions of chairman of its Australian Board and superintendent of its Australian business, holding these appointments for eleven years. Towards the end of 1939 he retired as superintendent, but remained as chairman.

At the outbreak of World War II Brudenell, almost sixty-three was on the unattached list of officers with the honorary rank of Lieutenant-General. Six months later, after the death of General Squires, Chief of the General Staff, he was called from retirement and, with the rank of General (the first Australian to hold it in wartime) became Chief of the General Staff and first member of the Military Board. On taking up the appointment he made it clear that, while he appreciated the honour, he was doing so to fill a gap and did not want to act to the detriment of any permanent staff officer and, "as soon as my services are unnecessary I want to return to the farm".

"A LIGHT WENT OUT"

He was not to see the farm again, as five months later, on 13th August 1940, flying in a R.A.A.F. Lockheed Hudson with Geoffrey Street, the Army Minister, and others for a cabinet meeting in Canberra, the plane while endeavouring to land, crashed and burst into flames, all on board being killed. C. E. W. Bean, the eminent journalist, author and historian who, as official war correspondent, had been with Brudenell throughout World War I, on learning of the tragedy says: "For me a light went out. He was the greatest man I have known".

After a service in St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, Brudenell's remains were laid to rest in the small cemetery at Buangor not far from his home. In the old church of St. John, Canberra, his memory is honoured by a plaque placed by his wife and family near the shrine given by them. He was knighted three times, receiving his knighthoods from: King George V, K.C.M.G., 1918, the Prince of Wales, K.C.B., 1920, and the Duke of York, K.C.V.O., 1927.

Eustace Nassau (1879-1899), the youngest of the family, was born less than two years after Brudenell. The two little boys were inseparable and devoted to each other. Eustace had a great affection for animals, particularly horses, and was an accomplished rider. Once when he was sent to Gympie (100 miles) with only

£-2.6 in his pocket, he spent it on feed for his horse and went without food for himself. He chose to go on the land and was a jackeroo at "Merivale" station near Rockhampton, where his brief career came to an end. While mounting a horse it reared and threw him. He was killed by the fall at the age of 20 years.

Of the members of this affectionate and long-lived White family only the two youngest were to meet with sudden death: Brudenell after the fulfilment of a distinguished career at 63, and Eustace at the threshold of what the future might have held in store for him.